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W H MALLOCK



Crime

Capit & twenty fourth

1882

115



POEMS.



THE
COLLEGE
OF
THE
SACRAMENTO, D. D.
BY
WILLIAM H. HARRIS,
PROFESSOR OF
THE
SACRAMENTO COLLEGE,
SACRAMENTO, CALIF.
1881.



POEMS

BY

WILLIAM HURRELL MALLOCK

'The mount is mute, the channel dry'



LONDON
CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY
1880

LOAN STACK

L O N D O N

Printed by STRANGEWAYS & SONS, Tower Street, Upper St. Martin & Lane.

953
M 155
1880



To

MY OLD FRIEND, AND PRIVATE TUTOR,

THE REVEREND W. B. PHILPOT,

LATE OF LITTLE HAMPTON, SUSSEX,

UNDER WHOSE CARE MY HAPPIEST DAYS HAVE BEEN SPENT,

AND IN WHOSE HOUSE

MOST OF THESE POEMS WERE WRITTEN.





PREFACE.

THE POEMS in this Volume, with but one or two exceptions, were written between my seventeenth and my twentieth year. A few months ago I had no thought that I should ever be thus drawing them from their privacy; but a certain number of friends who have seen them in manuscript tell me that they have taken some interest in them, and that, were they published, others might do so likewise. This has been repeated to me several times lately, and my vanity, if not my judgment, has made me think there may be some truth in it. But in acting on this suggestion with all a parent's pleasure, I

cannot but smile as I reflect how no fame or applause that anything could bring me now could ever equal the pleasure I should once have felt could I have only seen these verses published.

As for their own merits, and their varying tone and sentiment, the reader must judge them as he pleases; but a writer himself, who looks back over ten years at them, may be allowed the forlorn hope that what he sees of good in them he has at least tried to develop, and what he sees to be regretted he has at least tried to outgrow.

March 1880.





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PROËM

TO POEMS COLLECTED IN MSS.

AN. ÆT. 18 AND 19.

‘Neque chorda fonum reddit quem vult manus et mens.’



PROËM.

FAIR flocks of rainbow-plumed imaginings,
Flown hitherward from some untrodden dell
In the soul's mid forest, scarce accessible !
Lured by the lustre of your sheeny wings,
Perforce I chase you, and with patient care
Outspread in vain—in vain too oft, the snare ;
Or take at last but bruised and faded things.
Yes, wayward Speech, thou dost still falsify
Mine inmost thoughts and dearest ; and still I
Mourn over all thy maimed interpretations—
For all the subtler senses 'scaped like birds
From the coarse meshes of these woven words—
For the poor half-truth left, so like a lie !

An. æt. 19.



A CHILD'S LOVE-SONG

AND

A BOY'S LOVE-SONG.



A CHILD'S LOVE-SONG.

(COMPOSED IN A SWING.)

I.

THE breezes are fighting
About me, above me!
Oh, I should be happy,
If Celia would love me!

II.

But without Celia's love
The breezes may blow;
And, for all that I care,
To the devil may go!

Ann. æt. 8.

A BOY'S LOVE-SONG.

I.

IF Celia won't have you, fond lover,
Why squander in fighting the day?
If all your entreaties won't move her,
Repent it, and meet her half way.

II.

Suppose you were now to possess her,
Her beauty and all you desired;
How soon you would cease to care for her!
How soon of the beauty be tired!

III.

Then sing a more resolute measure,
Nor squander in fighting the day;
It cannot be much of a treasure
Whose charms with possession decay.

An. act. 13.



A BOY'S DREAM.

FROM THE LIBRARY
OF THE LATE
Revd. OWEN THOMAS, D. D.
LIVERPOOL.
PURCHASED AND PRESENTED BY
MR WILLIAM THOMAS,
BOOTLE, LIVERPOOL.
TO
THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE,
BALA.
DECEMBER, 1891.



A BOY'S DREAM.

I.

MY life is overhung with cold grey shade
Of frozen clouds that will not weep and die :
Hope's orphan flowers hang languid heads, and fade
'Neath such a wintry sky.

II.

But though my fun be quenched, of thy pale beams,
O Moon enchantress, let the man forlorn
Weave for his soul a dædal woof of dreams,
Proof against all cold scorn !

III.

Yes, let me here forget my life, my home,
In a rapt dream o'er these hyastral seas,
Charmed by the luminous fall of silver foam,
In foamy melodies :

IV.

Far gazing where the ocean moonlight fades
Into the starry mystery of night ;
Watching the wandering shudders of soft shades
That skim the quivering light ;

V.

Till, as fled snows in water, more and more
That which I am be lost in that I see.
Oh, dreamy, foamy moonlight! dreamy shore!
Oh, dreamy ecstasy!

VI.

My spirit's plumes expand, and a mute wind
Lifts them, and I am floated far away
From this dull world of loveless men and blind,
Close wedded to their clay,

VII.

Into new realms of buried mystery,
Whose secret gates some sudden hand unbars,
Where the wild beauties of old ages lie,
Looked down upon by stars.

VIII.

Strange sounds and musical are on the gales,
Of tongues long mute ; and lo ! beneath my eyes
Sweep carven-prows, and shadowy glimmering sails
Of ancient argosies ;

IX.

And triremes with the measured flash of oars,
And foam-wan plumes, and breastplates luminous,
And calm-eyed pilots, helming toward the shores
Of leagured Pergamus.

X.

My soul goes forth over the isles of fame,
White temples, and dark frondage ; panting seas
That wash with wavering fringe of liquid flame
The sacred Cyclades.

XI.

Now once again the startled stars behold
Wan throngs of faces turned towards the skies ;
Phantoms adoring phantom gods, in old
Hypæthral sanctuaries,

XII.

That stand mid lawns, for ages long unknown,
Islanded in the deep heart of forest-feas,
And resonant ever with the low lorn moan
Of Hamadryades.

XIII.

Now great lone lands, with feverish interchange
Of hollow shadows and pale sickly gleams,
Perplex my eyes ; wild places, vague and strange,
And veined with silvery streams—

XIV.

Streams rock-born, down from splintered mountains dashing,
Girdling below, with sparkling lines of light,
White skeletons of old mammoth cities flashing
On purple plains of night.

XV.

Rising o'er billowy mountain-lands unknown,
Wrecks of faint light strewn on a shadowy sea,
The aching moon looks down upon the lone
Caucasian Calvary ;

XVI.

And peering, pale over pale mountain snows,
On the worn watcher and the cruel chain,
Carves on the livid marble of his brows
Keen hieroglyphs of pain.

XVII.

He lieth there, calm, beautiful, and bound,
Walled by vast crags and roofed by fretted skies.
What anguish speaks in that pure gaze profound
Of far-ward, earnest eyes !

XVIII.

But what is here—this darker prison-place—
These friends with muffled faces and held breath ?
And what is this—this one unearthly face—
This hemlock-draught of death ?

XIX.

Ah see, he lifts the elixir to his lips,
And, like the moon unclouding by degrees,
Breaks from the dimness of terrene eclipse
The soul of Socrates.

XX.

Hail, my one love, old beauty born again,
Dear lovely things of ages long gone by,
Whose last smiles minish from the world, as men,
Grown lovelefs, multiply !

XXI.

As a lone fitter on a sea-rock craves
Headlong to plunge into the clear green seas,
Catching the wavering lustre through the waves
Of ocean-palaces,

XXII.

So have I longed, ye beautiful dead years,
For you and yours, seeing the things that be
Touch me with cold that nips, or heat that fears,
And have small part in me.

XXIII.

For what to me is man, whose ruthless tread
Tramps beauty's flame to ashes day by day ;
And, even with its death not fatiated,
Sweeps the poor dust away ?

XXIV.

Wherefore, dear things of ages long gone by,
My one own love, dead Beauty born again,
I hail you and I worship you—yea I,
An alien among men,

XXV.

Unloved of all. But ye, ye long-closed lids,
Unfold for me ; comfort me, splendid eyes !
Smile lips, embalmed beneath the pyramids
Of heaped-up centuries !

XXVI.

Spurn me not, neither scorn me, peerless throng,
Who roam immortal through the fields of verse.
Queens of the wizard universe of song,
Be ye my comforters !

XXVII.

Lo, yonder—who is she, who wildly-eyed
Yearneth for somewhat o'er the star-lit sea,
From yon wet rock, wheraround the sluggish tide
Sobs flow and heavily ?

XXVIII.

The flagging wind floats her loose fluctuous hair,
 As waves float weed. Unheeded creeping down,
 Her raiment leaves her glimmering bosom bare :
 Sea-dews are moist thereon.

XXIX.

‘Ah, whither through thine eyes hath thy soul fled ?
 My Dido, he will not return to thee !
 We twain are lone : let twain be comforted.
 Dost thou think scorn of me ?

XXX.

‘Kiss me, sweet lips, that have nor cold nor heat,
 Thou fair, sweet, supersensual sensuousness !
 Lull me with love that sees itself is sweet,
 With passion passionless !’

XXXI.

The eyes that have been gazing elsewhere
 Droop down on mine, as these words strike her ears :
 And lo, the hard dry ice of glazed despair
 Thaws in slow large warm tears.

XXXII.

The relaxed lips, half opening, dreamily,
Breathe soft things over me, her worshipper—
So soft they all melt in the moist wind's sigh,
And the sad wave-water.

XXXIII.

I only feel on mine those lips of hers,
And the souls mingling, where the twain mouths cling,
In harmony like sun-blent rain-colours,
Or stricken string with string.

XXXIV.

And each soul's aching melts in sighs, as snow,
Spring-charmed, in dew ; love making all past pain
Sweet sadness, as a red sun sets a-glow
A dying day of rain.

XXXV.

But, hark ! a gasping wind is gathering :
I catch a sudden sprinkling of blown spray.
I start : my bubble bursts, and everything—
My whole dream—falls away.

XXXVI.

Numbed Self springs up ; and, fresh from trance, once more
Clutches my soul, once more made void and cold ;
And I, lone on this old familiar shore,
With stupid eyes, behold

XXXVII.

A great night hung with starlight, stooping down
Over the tumbled silver of the sea ;
And hear a voice, ' Is beauty wholly gone ?
Let these things comfort thee :

XXXVIII.

' And Love, and Good, and Beauty, one thing crowned
With many names, lead on thy swerveless soul
By ways wherein but parts of good are found,
To realms where reigns the whole.

XXXIX.

' Thou dost not seek the soul in confined clay :
Then seek not Beauty in the blind, dead years.
Onward ! This life will soon have passed away,
Of prisoned straining tears.

XL.

‘To thee the Nile of Time is sourceless ever !
Vain, vain to tempt the upper mystery !
Trim thou thy sails for where the buffeting river
Meets with God’s boundless sea.’

Littlehampton, an. æt. 17.



SONG.



SONG.

I.

I DID not offer thee up mine heart,
Nor did I ask, thou know'st, for thine.
I only said, 'Until we part
Lend it, and I will lend thee mine.'

II.

And have we past those hours in vain?
We met, we smiled—we smile, we sever.
Is it in vain that thus we twain
Have met, though thus we part for ever?

III.

In vain? Shall I ever forget your eyes,
Or the love that died of despair in me?
For my love but lived in despair's despite,
Like a new-born babe that sees the light
For a moment, and smiles, and dies,
And lives in its mother's memory.

An. æt. 16.

LUX MALIGNA.



LUX MALIGNA.

HER eyes were like Cocytus' midnight deeps,
When far in the transparent darkness sleeps
The moon, whose face, as the waves tremble, flashes
In oily ripples, mid the reedy lashes
Dying incessantly. Who would not shrink,
Shivering, from that sad stream's uncertain brink,
Fancying the noiseless volumes sliding o'er
Strange horrors unconceived, and brimmed with store
Of lizard-footed things? So none there were
Who loved those eyes, and the strange moonlight there.

An. æt. 18.



A FRIEND.



A FRIEND.

FRRIEND let me call you—may I? friend to me ;
And like a casket let that wide word be,
Wherein, perchance, some costlier treasure lies—
Wherein we hide, in clouds of close eclipse,
The faltering few things known to lips and lips—
The many mute things known to eyes and eyes !

An. æt. 18.



ALTER ET IDEM.



ALTER ET IDEM.

I.

THIS day, in this same place, we met last year,
And Absence, the omnipotent severer,
Since then on thee and me hath worked his will;
I would, my last year's love, as thou stand'st here,
My last year's love, I would I loved thee still!

II.

Does not this place seem strange to thee and me—
This fresh cool wash and whisper of the sea,
We knew so well together? Oh, how strange!
All's out of tune now—jars discordantly.
This old known place, I would it too would change!

III.

How miserably the same those cliffs of grey!
And see—a boat again, too, in the bay!
And yon lone sea-girt grey rock, sunset-lit
With those same tints we two admired that day!
My last year's love, hast thou forgotten it?

IV.

And thou—ah, wherefore art thou still so fair?
Why are thy smiles still just so what they were,
Save that for me they speak not any love?
Why hast thou still that same bright golden hair,
Now I have no share in the praise thereof?

V.

I may not call you now what I did then.
Your lips and smiles are cold and alien.
Those times and these—how like! how wide apart!
I have lost what I shall never learn again.
I have forgotten the by-ways of your heart.

An. act. 18.



ON LAKE COMO.



ON LAKE COMO.

THE stars are o'er our heads in hollow skies,
In hollow skies the stars beneath our boat.
Betwixt the stars of two infinities,
Midway upon a gleaming film, we float.
My lips are on the sounding horn ;
The sounding horn with music fills.
Faint echoes backwards from the world are borne,
Tongued by yon dusky zone of slumbering hills.
The world spreads wide on every side,
But dark and cold it seems to me.
What care I, on this charmed tide,
For aught save those far stars and thee ?

An. æt. 17.



IN THE CELL.

‘Even in this solitary life the Saint underwent many temptations and assaults of the Evil One ; and he relates that on one occasion the recollection of a beautiful woman, whom he had seen at Rome, took such possession of his imagination, that he was on the point of quitting his retirement and betaking himself to her company.’

‘Oh tortuosas vias ! Væ animæ audaci quæ speravit, si a te recessisset, se aliquid melius habituram !’

S. AUG. *Conf.* lib. vi. 26.



IN THE CELL.

I.

I MUST have knelt here long, the black-wick'd light
 Flares now so grossly. In mine ears the night
 Is dumb as at its season loneliest.
 What do I here? Hardly I know aright;
 But I must kneel still, for I dare not rest.

II.

Kneel in my wretchedness—leagues, leagues away
 From all the hours and faces of the day.
 How faint and far they seem! They little guess
 With what strange twain alone I strive—not they—
 Here in my mid soul's ghostliest wilderness—

III.

My sin, and Christ. He, worn with many a wound,
 Here pleads. His voice—ah, hark to that sad sound
 I dare not, but I feel it all the same.
 And there, not pleads, but scorns, with gold hair crowned,
 She whose mere scorn but fans and feeds my flame.

IV.

Christ and my sin and I, a dream-like three !
 Some dreadful thing, it seems, has come to me,
 More dreadful than I wot of. When 'tis day,
 I shall but give a little start to see
 All my face changed—my hair grown sudden grey.

V.

I know not why, to-night, but all things seem
 Like feverish shapes of some despairing dream.
 How strangely ghastlier and more woe-begone
 Stares in the lamplight's waver of gloom and gleam
 This haggard Christ in carven marble wan !

VI.

Strangely the little shadows shake and crawl
 On the rough stone-work of this nude dim wall,
 And pale stone semblance of God's thorny crown.
 How strange these seem—my sin, and I, and all !
 Oh, what a dull weight loads mine eyelids down !

VII.

Eyelids and eyes ache ! My brain reels ; my knees
 May have been bended thus for centuries,
 It almost seems, here on this bare stone floor.
 I have been changed, I think, by some disease,
 And am become a nightmare—man no more.

VIII.

Into mine ears the silence creeps and clings,
Grotesque with hofts of quaint, vague whisperings.

Oh for some common living thing, to break
This silent, long monotony of things,
And show me truly if I sleep or wake !

IX.

Perhaps 'twill soon be day. I do not know.
I cannot tell if time move swift or slow.

Hours may be moments, moments may be hours.
Would I could lighten a little this load of woe,
Ere through the broken East the dull dawn lowers.

X.

Dawn ! ay, and day ! Alas ! my part in day,
It seems, is gone from me—quite past away,
Like young life's guilelessness and love and trust.
Day will at least come back as dimly
As ghosts of these, if come at length it must.

XI.

Oh, Lord, have pity on all this barren pain !
Lo, how two wills have striven, until the twain,
Each sickly-tired, each unvictorious,
Have grown, like streams drunk by a sandy plain,
Lost in blank wastes of woe monotonous :

XII.

Whilst weariness completes my misery.
My head feels heavy, aching giddily :
The flaring lamp, too, reels for weariness,
Impure and tired and dizzy, even as I,
Whose whole good part has waned to one distress.

XIII.

Wearily flaring—ay !—Why, that's the flit—
Yes—of a gnat's wings, snared and singled in it.
The lamp's alive at least. Lo, once again
I feel some quick prism of the spirit split
Into live parts this formless sense of pain.

XIV.

Again my love confronts me. Again I know
I cannot, cannot leave it—not although
There's bitter leaven in this forbidden bread.
God, let that taste abide. 'Tis better so ;
For whilst that lasts I am not wholly dead.

XV.

But yet I cannot pray. No tear will fall
Out of my soul's dry eyes. Aloud I call—
My voice—but my heart fails me evermore.
Would I could sin my sin out once for all,
Not let the longing rot me to the core !

XVI.

Oh, sterile strife ! Oh, hateful bended knees !
Oh, mockery of bitterest mockeries !
I cannot pray. I totter towards despair.
These be no prayers, mere sighs and groans like these,
Though phantom-shaped deceitfully like prayer.

XVII.

What shall I do ? Rise from my knees again ?
Thus with my very body why remain
Lying, O Thou far patient God, to Thee ?
Am I indeed so very wicked, then ?
And is Christ's work made wholly vain in me ?

XVIII.

For what hope's left ? I struggle in vain to pray.
Ev'n mid my groans my soul still steals away
Back to the haunting hair, and proud soft eyes—
The soul forbidding what the sad lips say—
Mere words—mere hollow husk of prayer-like lies.

XIX.

In vain I start and struggle. In vain I try
To think on that kind Christ I crucify.
The sad face fades, and from the dim eclipse
Her eyes and hair shine forth luxuriously,
With curved contempt upon her listless lips.

XX.

Oh, sad love, heavy upon me like despair !
Oh, large dark eyes that haunt me everywhere
 With eloquent wealth of lids ! Pale, perfect face,
Crowned with the strange surprise of golden hair,
 Leave me—oh, leave me for a little space !

XXI.

Wouldst thou but one short moment tarry away,
Then might I seize the time, and cry, and say,
 ‘ Cleanse me, O Lord, and make my sick heart whole.’
One prayer might save me ; but I cannot pray,
 Save groaning, ‘ Pity, O Lord, this prayerless soul !’

XXII.

Alas ! for all my strugglings I shall die ;
No prayer will come for all my agony ;
 Vain is the strength of all my travailings.
A snared bird vainly beats its wings to fly,
 How hard foe’er it strive, the gin’s tooth clings.

XXIII.

What, then, are prayers ? I think no prayer could be
Wrung out of a man’s heart more bitterly.
 One after one I feel them start and roll—
These blood-drops of my soul’s Gethsemane ;
 My groans, the bloody sweat-drops of my soul.

XXIV.

And all in vain, it seems—in vain, in vain !
I scarce know what I say, for dizzy pain
Blurs all in one confusion. Everything
Reels in the sick delirium of my brain—
Yea, Christ reels too ; yet still to Him I cling,

XXV.

And sin to me. Both cling—I know not how ;
All swims in this hard aching of my brow :
And now night's come, and none may work therein,
Curse, curse my weakness ! Sleep is on me now.
Mine eyes ache. I must slumber with my sin.

XXVI.

Mine eyelids can no longer hold apart ;
The giddy lamplight seems to dance and dart,
And sickens me. Mine eyeballs—how they ache !
Pity, O Christ, mine unrepentant heart,
For, come what will, I can no longer wake.

XXVII.

Yet, sinking in this bitter lethargy,
' God, God ! ' I call, even as some drowner's cry,
As his strength fails, who knows not what he saith,
But thinks he shrieks—' Haste, help me, or I die ! '
Christ help me ! Sleep—and is this also death ?

An. æt. 19.

SONG.

Ἑλιβάτοις ὑπὸ κενθμῶσι γενοίμαν,
ἵνα με πτεροῦσαν ὄρνιν
θεὸς ἐν πταναῖς ἀγέλαισιν θειή
ἀρθείην δ' ἐπὶ πόντιον
κῦμα τᾶς Ἀδριηνᾶς
ἄκτᾶς Ἑριδανοῦ θ' ὕδωρ.

EURIP. *Hip.* 727-752.



S O N G.

WOULD God I were now by the sea,
By the winding, wet, worn caves,
By the ragged rifts of the rocks ;
And that there as a bird I might be
White-winged with the sea-skimming flocks,
Where the spray and the breeze breathe free
O'er the ceaseless mirth of the waves,
And dishevel their loose grey locks.
I would spread my wings on the moist salt air,
And my wide white wings should carry me,
Lifted up, out over the sea,
Carry, I heed not where —
Somewhither far away ;
Somewhither far from my hateful home,
Where the breast of the breeze is sprinkled with spray,
Where the restless deep is maddened with glee,
Over the waves' wild ecstasy,
Through the free blown foam.

An. ct. 18.





A MAY IDYL.



A MAY IDYL.

I.

WOULD I might lean and dream here evermore,
 Thus by green shadow of hazels murmured o'er,
 Nor ever wander away, clear pool, from thee,
 Through whose pure wave thine amber-flickering floor
 Swims ever upwards, wavering languidly !

II.

For May is ruddy and gold amongst the trees,
 All round the little valley's fides of peace,
 Where no man's voice, nor any voice, makes stir,
 Save sometimes o'er the leafy loneliness
 The long, loose laugh of the wild woodpecker.

III.

Yes, here, clear pool, deliciously alone,
 Here let me muse and dream, and make mine own
 All of thy beauty, and every change of thine—
 The tremulous shades that cling to every stone,
 And all those tawny stones that shake and shine :

IV.

Or else, what new sweet charm they bring for thee,
These breaths, whereof the hazels lisp to me,
 Wildering thy floors with glimmerings manifold;
Or melting into one rich mystery
 The enamelled softness of their brown and gold :

V.

And then, again, the breezy shudder allayed,
And those slow coiling lights that float and fade
 Down through the clear mid-water, until once more
The little tangled tremor of woven shade
 Spreads its live tissue o'er the pebbly floor.

VI.

Yes, here, loved pool, here let me dream ! for here,
Through mine own heart's most tranquil lake-water,
 Lights also from afar, send other gleams :
Dreams of that distant other love draw near,
 That seems so sweet, and only sweet in dreams !

VII.

Again—ah, slothful-sweet !—it seems I see
Beauty which once I knew full bitterly :
 Fair faces, long forgotten, rise again.
I see them smile, and frown and smile, at me ;
 And sigh for all their falseness, with no pain.

VIII.

Then, lifting lids, I catch thy mirrorings
Of leaf and sky, of green and glancing things,
Which oft thy wayward pebbles waver through.
Oh, how like these are my imaginings
One tenderest interlude of false and true!

An. æt. 18.



TO B. W.

ON HER BIRTHDAY, JUNE 21st.



To B. W.

ON HER BIRTHDAY, JUNE 21ST.

CHILD of the whole year's floweriest time,

Sister to all the sunniest hours,
Daughter of June, whose each year's chime

Is rung by choirs of birds and flowers ;
The Summer's queen of the days is near,
Like a rose the Summer opens and swells.

Listen a moment ! Pause and hear
How the richest roses of all the year

Once more are ringing thy birthday bells.

Soft be my words. Thou hast others near
With words and wishes and gifts more dear ;
And as for me, may'st thou only hear

My words as a whisper borne by the breeze

From dwelling to dwelling across the trees —

A half-articulate voice that says,
Though the rose-scent dies and the rose decays,

The rose of the spirit never is sere.

Soft as roses be all thy ways,

And thou, may'st thou through all thy days

Open and greaten even as these,

Petal by petal, and year by year.

Torquay, an. æt. 19.

TO MDLLE. A. DE B.

WRITTEN ON A CHRISTMAS CARD.



TO MDLLE. A. DE B.

I.

WHAT shall the humble verse express
I dare to-day to breathe to thee?
Levity, or tenderneſs?
It's all the fame to me.

II.

Shall I ſay your charming dreſſes
Have a ſubtler charm than faſhion?
Shall I ſay your glance expreſſes
Something more than paſſion?

III.

Shall I tell you that your face is
Something more than pretty?
Shall I call your wayward phraſes
Something more than witty?

IV.

Shall I tell you that you bring
A joy where'er you enter,
That's warm as summer, fresh as spring,
And stops as long as winter?

V.

No—I'll say no word of this :
It's all so plain, although so true.
I'll only wish you half the bliss
We all receive from you.

Christmas, 1879.



TO A FRIEND.



TO A FRIEND.

OF all the many memories we have sown,
We two together, and seen arise in flowers,
Whose roots go deep into the past sweet hours,
Which one, when all the rest are overblown,
Shall we still water and tend with constant care ?
Ah, fellow-watcher many a long night through,
For me, I were most fain to think of you
Pale as so many a dawn with me you were,
Just when the night turned chill, and the grey air
Found all things fallen on sleep, and wet with dew ;
And on your soul the solemn past hours weighed,
Those marvellous hours through which you had waked
with me,
Watching the tender moonlight and soft shade,
Like wavering love-thoughts which vague doubts invade,
Irresolute on the sweet breast of the sea,

All the night long ; until we turned to mark,
Over long lines of dim hills far away,
The slow grey grow into the Eastern dark,
And the slow saffron grow into the grey.
Leave Chance to garden all meaner memories !
Let hope and triumph, let defeat and care,
Let outworn loves, dimmed eyes and faded hair,
Rouse if they will remorse, or smiles or sighs ;
So that we still may ponder how all of these
Shrank back abashed before those moonlit seas,
And the grey calm of those far-dawning skies !

Torquay, an. æt. 19.



BRUSSELS AND OXFORD.



BRUSSELS AND OXFORD.

I.

HOW first we met do you still remember ?
Do you still remember our last adieu ?
You were all to me, that sweet September :
Oh, what, I wonder, was I to you ?

II.

But I will not ask. I will leave in haze
My thoughts of you, and your thoughts of me ;
And will rest content that those sweet fleet days
Are still my tenderest memory.

III.

I often dream how we went together
Mid glimmering leaves and glittering lights,
And watched the twilight Belgian weather
Dying into the starriest nights :

IV.

And over our heads the throbbing million
Of bright fires beat, like my heart, on high :
And the music clashed from the lit pavilion,
And we were together, you and I.

V.

But a hollow memory now suffices
For what, last summer, was real and true ;
Since here am I by the misty Isis,
And under the fogs of London you.

VI.

But what if you, like a swift magician,
Were to change the failing, flowerless year—
Were to make that true that is now a vision,
And bring back Summer and Brussels here ?

VII.

For Fanny, I know, that if you come hither
You *will* bring with you the time of flowers,
And a breath of the tender Belgian weather,
To Oxford's grey autumnal towers.

VIII.

And in frost and fog though the late year dies,
Yet the hours again will be warm and fair,
If they melt once more in your dark, deep eyes,
And are meshed again in your golden hair.

Oxford, an. æt. 23.



NATURA VERTICORDIA.

Sed ubi oris aurei Sol radiantibus oculis
Lustravit aethera album, fola dura, mare ferum,
Pepulitque noctis umbras vegetis sonipedibus
Ita de quiete molli, ravidâ sine rabie,
Simul ipsa pectore Atys sua facta recoluit,
Liquidâque mente vidit sine quis ubique foret,
Animo æstuante rursus reditum ad vada tetulit :
Ibi maria vasta vivens lacrymantibus oculis
Patriam allocuta mœsta est ita voce miseriter.

CATULLUS.



NATURA VERTICORDIA.

I.

AH, on that morning how I cursed the light !
 Let it be nameless—all the shameless night,
 The spent fleet pleasure, fanged by hound-swift pain.
 The pitiless morning smote mine aching sight,
 And would not let me hide in sleep again.

II.

No spongy East—no slough of soiled grey sky :
 I could have borne that well. But splendidly,
 Pitilessly pure, and pitilessly fair,
 I knew the Eöan rose-light—fornid I,
 Unclean in all that wash of radiant air.

III.

The day-spring crushed me with its voiceless scorn,
 Burning towards God, nor heeding me forlorn,
 Dumb and cast out from all that infinite choir—
 That Titan praise—the pæan of the morn,
 Scaling God's throne with a thunder of colour and fire.

IV.

Ah, there outside, the splendour and the blaze !
The soft sun, crimsoning through an amber haze,
Was flushing all the far fair orient sea.
And I shrank, and cried, ‘ My right is gone to gaze,
Alas, with these polluted eyes, on thee !

V.

‘ Guiltily now I tremble as I behold
That beauty which I yearned so for of old,
Cringe now with shame in the old clear love’s stead—
Cower from yon glory of molten misty gold,
Sublimed in fervent fumes of rose and red.

VI.

‘ Then is the colour hushed a space ; and higher,
Splinters and glittering flakes of scarlet fire
In wastes of clearest saffron, pale and rare ;
And over all, in many a crown-like gyre,
Pink fleeces floating faint in purple air.

VII.

‘ Oh, love estranged ! oh, sweet, lost paradise
Of light and colour ! To my shame-shrunk eyes,
Those great pure things—how alien now they are !
How do they scorn me, these intense blue skies,
And clear white chasteness of the morning star !

VIII.

‘How am I fallen and changed since yesterday,
When yonder sun was clouded soft and grey,
From this same place I watched with silent sight
The shifting sunlights on the shadowy bay,
And faint horizons flash with lengths of light;

IX.

‘And felt my heart, so standing here alone,
Throb, and my whole soul on a sudden grown
Yearning and glad and wild and sad in me,
For love of those far happy clouds that shone,
Grey fleeced with silver, o’er the silver sea.

X.

‘Then ghosts of unknown longings swelled my breast,
Measureless love and infinite unrest,
A reaching after some withdrawn Delight,
I knew was somewhere, lured me to the quest,
Lost parent of an orphan appetite—

XI.

‘Of a longing that lay ever in wait for me,
To sweep me far, far off, ærially,
Out of myself, away from all mean things,
Strong as the sea-bound wind, whereon to sea
Is swept the sea-mew’s sweet white width of wings.

XII.

‘ Vague, vast, at sundry times ’twould drift me—yea,
The vaster for its vagueness—far away,
I wist not whitherward, in the stream thereof;
Tinged with the many moods of night and day,
Changeful of shape, yet still one changeless love.

XIII.

‘ Oh, how it filled me, lured me, evermore!
Now in the intricate forest’s foliated core—
Green ravelled lights, and rich-barked boughs of trees:
Now in the noon’s bright foam-flash showered to shore,
And blue, soft distances of sunlit seas:

XIV.

‘ Now in fierce night-falls o’er the desolate main,
When death was in the weird waves’ mad refrain,
And the lightning shook its wild hair on the sweep
Of the great free foam-fraught sea-going hurricane,
Over the hoary darkness of the deep.

XV.

‘ And now, when skies were faint and stars were few,
’Twould thrill me, shaped like sadness, through and through—
Times when the low winds lisped their tenderest tune;
Dim sorrow-flaking seasons of soft dew,
And lulled seas silvering slowly to the moon.

XVI.

‘ Yes, everywhere I felt, at every hour,
Through my soul’s lulls or tumults, one same Power
Drawing my whole self open by degrees ;
My love seemed greetening towards that perfect flower
Whereof the strange witch sang to Socrates.

XVII.

‘ Then these things made me noble. Then they seemed
For me with voices. Voices, or I dreamed,
Lured me at all times and on every side,
Wordlessly crying, “ Come ! come ! ” and they seemed
The voices of the Spirit and the Bride.

XVIII.

‘ But now—ah, fallen, fallen !—I do not dare
To raise myself and hearken. Alas ! I bear
A great weight, heavier than a millstone is—
Bitterer than any terrible proud despair—
Self’s scorn of self, God’s bitterest Nemesis.

XIX.

‘ For now this sun-stream of clear rosy light
Serves but to show me vile in mine own sight,
All my soul’s raiment spotted still with mire,
Marred by the ghastly havoc of the night,
And conquering ravage of a scorned desire.

XX.

‘ And now the old voices all in vain for me
Will found ; for now no proud antiphone
Dares, as of old, to answer from my soul.
How will it cease, the evangel of the sea !
How will the dawn unfold, a vain blank scroll !

XXI.

‘ Maimed, crawling wretch ! Nay, I shall rise no more.
Poor false-fledged Icarus, wingless as before ;
Maimed by the fall ! To its old mortality
This mortal cleaves. What right had I to soar ?
Of the earth earthy—ay, the earth for me !

XXII.

‘ Oh, how my tense brow aches with dull, thick care !’
Then I threw wide the window, and laid bare
My face, to realife that hour of hours.
Ah, what a gust of freshness !—morning air
With rainy scents of earth, and whiffs of flowers !

XXIII.

And there the birds were, singing ; and far and sweet
Came the crisp shore-song of the ebb’s retreat ;
And I sighed and cried as I looked towards the sea,
‘ How must thy sands now swim one shining sheet,
With orange sunlight, and the breeze breathe free !

XXIV.

‘ And all the woods be fed with moist perfumes
Of new-blown flowers festooning green wet glooms,
Which yet the level dawn-flush filters through ;
And dense drenched evergreens droop their pendulous plumes,
Grey with the diamond sparkle of all the dew !

XXV.

‘ But I —— ’ And yet I still stood gazing there,
Heavy with sorrow in my stupid stare ;
As might some proud queen’s scorned, unlooked-at lover,
Who, thinking so to cheat entire despair,
Keeps gazing still, though all his hopes are over.

XXVI.

And thus—I know not how—a stealthy Peace,
Swathed in dim weeds like Grief’s, by soft degrees,
To me, who knew her not, drew gently near ;
Till my lids smarted with a coming ease,
And the dawn-light glimmered dim through a shaken tear.

XXVII.

And I felt my shame’s dull ice was molten through,
And hung there flickering, globed in hopeful dew :
And once again a sad, compassionate cry,
Came in the holy wordless voice I knew,—
‘ Infirm of love, why hast thou left us ? Why ?

XXVIII.

‘What hast thou found more pure, more great, more fair,
Maddened for whose sweet sake thou thus couldst dare
To blind thine eyes to us, and laugh to scorn
The flower-sweet fellowship of the early air,
And far-flushed outgoings of the even and morn?

XXIX.

‘What is it?—what, thus worthier far than we?
Art thou content, and shalt thy bartering be?
The Holy Spirit of dawn, with its tongues of flame,
The proud song of the sunrise and the sea,
Sold for those red lips, and their babble of shame?

XXX.

‘What hast thou found more than the love we gave?
What sympathy more strong to succour and save?
Hast not thou known a deeper comfort lies
In the deep language of the wind and wave
Than in any human words, or silent eyes?

XXXI.

‘Do not man’s friendships fail, and fade, and fall;
And prisoned love turn weary, and weak, and pall;
Lust humble, and blind, and blast, and then grow cold?
But we change not, we overlive them all—
All lusts and loves, all young desires or old.

XXXII.

‘Launch then on us thy unanchored life, for we
Sweep ever, ever on to the unknown sea,
In a river of music. Hear our call—be wise!
On sweep the floods! Say, shall they carry thee
On their broad breast of boundless harmonies?

XXXIII.

‘Lo, there is no desire so wild of wing,
No strange pure nomad passion pasturing
By nameless wells and remote grafs alone,
But strike our harp, and thou shalt find some string
With these to quiver and yearn in unison.

XXXIV.

‘Come now, and prove us if our words be true!
Rise, roam the fragrant deep green places through,
Where the new gospels of the wild-flowers tell
How dew-awakened scents and virgin dew
Make a whole heaven in every bending bell.

XXXV.

‘Or where the wave’s voice sparkles in the sun
With cold, pure foam—there make the done undone;
There spurn the past! for lo, our lovers must
Draw near as in no humbled vesture spun
Of love’s threads tangled in the loom of lust.

XXXVI.

‘Rise o’er thy past, and burn its routed night
Into gold fumes, and clouds of crimson light,
Sunlike!’ — And as I gazed, more splendidly
Glowed, as it seemed, the dawn-flush, and more bright
Rippled the rough fresh rose-light on the sea.

XXXVII.

And from mine eastward lips broke forth a cry,
‘Ah, that my flesh were but a cloud, to die
Into the infinite joy that hath no name,
As dies yon rose-mist into the blue, pure sky—
Yon almost fluttering film of rare rose flame!

XXXVIII.

‘Haste—let me forth, and wander by the seas,
Or through green places, damp with flowers and trees,
And wash old stains off—cleanse my soul anew!
Yea, surely find a sacrament in these,
A second baptism in the morning dew.’

An. st. 19.



ÆNEAS TO DIDO.



ÆNEAS TO DIDO.

I.

I LEAVE thee, but I love thee none the less,
And this my love, self-wounded, smarts and stings.
Hail, Sorrow ! like a goad thy bitterness
Shall drive me to great things.

II.

For Love's sweet wine has lulled me overlong,
Loosening my soul—woe's me ! But now at length
Let it be mixed and made with scorn and wrong,
A bitter draught of strength.

III.

I am athirst for such, having known of old
Greatness is suckled at the breasts of Pain.
But must—ah ! must the sword of burning cold
Go through the hearts of twain ?

IV.

Hark! the winds call me—‘ Lover, love, fly !
We to thy true home will companion thee—
Divine untold-of realms, whereto the sky
Stoops down behind the sea.

V.

‘ Shake loose thy fails, and leave the land’s delight,
And we will sweep thee outward to thine home.
Drive through the wild green billows, and the white
Wild-driven smoke of foam ! ’

VI.

Ev’n as the pale hag’s muffled muttering
Draws down the moon from heaven, the spell of Fate
Draws me from thee. Our bonds in bursting string,
And all are violate !

VII.

I am doomed, and called, and destined. Mine, mine own
Destiny calls ; nor needs to call again.
Though late, I come ; and may my pain atone
For sweet days spent in vain !

VIII.

Oh, love, I seal our fevering with this kifs.

Thy lips were warm when thus I first waxed bold ;
Not dew-damp, bloodless, miserable like this.

Oh, love, thy lips are cold !

IX.

Farewell, thou sweet child of my great foe's wrath !

Farewell, O pleading, beautiful sad face !

Thou wast the golden fruitage in my path,
Dropt to make vain my race.

X.

I may not heed mine agony nor thine,

O loved one, over-fair, and over-true !

Hail, painful Glory, making Pain divine !

Adieu, sweet love, adieu !

An. æt. 17.



FROM AN UNFINISHED DRAMA,

CALLED

ÆNEAS AND DIDO.



FROM AN UNFINISHED DRAMA,

CALLED

ÆNEAS AND DIDO.

*Scene : A Terrace overlooking the Sea, before Dido's Palace
at Carthage. Moonlight.*

MERCURY.

FAR cradled in the sacred secret west
My dwelling lies, from every taint of ill
Bastioned, and belted round inviolably,
By azure oceans glassed in boundless calm,
O'er whose clear face not ever mortal keel
Passes to blur the blue transparency.
There is no cold nor frost, nor any care,
Nor any tread of sinward-hastening feet
Pollutes the soil ; but the pure opulent Earth
Pours forth her wealth for those that ever are,
And gods behold their father face to face.
And there some souls—so fate decrees—of men,

Some—very few—may hard admittance win,
Purged and made holy by the lustral wave
Of the soul's blood, spilt in the war with flesh,
And over flesh victorious. But from this
Hard fight most shrink—most even of these elect,
Deadened by the gross senses, and no less
By those great foes to calmness, love and hate,
Not bridled in. But that such sad defeat
Befall not now my strenuous care must be ;
For I am Maia's son, the wanderer god,
The pinion-footed, golden-wanded god,
Whom with a matter of no mean import
Freighted the fire now sends ; and here I stand
Before this palace, seeking speech of one—
One of the holy elect, who, led astray
By too-encroaching love, without high aid
Must miss for ever the steep road to fame.
And, therefore, hither am I sent of Jove,
To unglue the eyelids of his sleeping soul,
Stuck with such fatal rheum. Ha!—this is he!
But not alone—his beautiful curse is with him ;
Dear curse, more deadly in that she is dear.
They come to hear the voices of the night ;
They come to look into each other's eyes,
And tie fresh vows about them. Ha, dark Queen!

Thou little know'st one burning word of mine
Can smoulder up that hemp of lovers' knots ;
But thou shalt soon be taught. I'll wait awhile,
And view thee viewless, till more fitting time.

Enter ÆNEAS and DIDO.

Æneas. Oh, light and silence of the summer night,
How thy voice fills me, though the words are lost—
All lost save one, which, ever like a mist
Seen flung above some unseen waterfall,
Rises. That word is love. O queen! mine own,
Look in my eyes. There was a hungry season,
When, inarticulate as a wave that creeps
With its white lips into a whispering shell,
My soul received these voices, knowing not
What is to love ; but through the famishing days
A hunger haunted me, without the knowledge
To seek for food ; and, like a hunted stag,
Driven to the verge of some sheer precipice,
And wild to spring somewhither, from my lips
My spirit hung ; till love, revealed through thee,
Came beyond hope, as breaks the sudden moon
On one who, wandering blindly round his home,
Seems to himself far strayed into strange ways.
My Dido, speak.

Dido. O Trojan, cleave to me !
 None can love more than I ; most will love less.
 Oh, use me not as thy soul's stepping-stone,
 Climbing, as some men climb, to loftier calm !
 Tread not my poor neck down in death to rise,
 If rise thou canst.

Æneas. Rest, for I cannot rise.

Dido. I trust thee. Yet—deep in my heart there lurks
 Some cold disquiet. Warm me with thy words,
 And tell me of the growing of thy love.

* * * *

Scene, the same. Time, towards morning. A storm rising.
MERCURY meanwhile has been troubling the mind of
ÆNEAS with thoughts of Italy, and his destined work
there.

Dido. Will not you look on me ? Ah, what means this—
 Your pale, changed face ? And why so wistfully
 Goes ever to the seaward your wan gaze ?
 What strange thoughts stir you now ?

Æneas. My memories
 Rise like a storm and stir me. In mine ears
 Harsh shrieks and hollow rumour of armour and arms
 Sound like a dream, and windy manes and plumes

Of horses and of heroes waver and tofs
Dreamlike and dim ; and all the plains of Troy
Move once again with clouds of battle-duft
That meet like thunder-clouds, and through the dark
I see the javelins lighten, and I hear
The round shields boom like timbrels, mid the shouts
Of fighting men and falling. Hark! the wind
Rises, and wheeling voices of the air
Sing in our ears, and ever sweep to sea—
The sea where no land is, nor any home
But storm, and calm, and freedom. Storm—ay, storm!
I feel it, it will come, it is in my hair—
The sweet, wild, infant storm. Ah me, my love,
Do not you feel the wild wind in your hair?
What! Are my words wild, too? What is it I say?
What have my memories to do with storm?
Ah, I have seen—— Have I not made my nest,
As the white, wandering, homeless sea-bird does,
On the storms and wide free places of man's life—
Battle, and wreck, and ruin? Have I not been
Nursling of many storms? Ah, me! that night
Wherein my eyes were opened, and I saw,
Staring aghast, where all the towers of Troy
Loomed high like dreams above the fiery clouds—
Suddenly saw how all the quivering haze

Was full of stalking Prefences, that went
Tall as the towers, and breasting drifts of flame—
The cloudy immortal forms of ruining gods!
And there, far off, remote from all the rest,
Prankt on the topmost crag of masonry,
Was one—a lonely terror in the night,
Shining, who held in hand a shield that shone,
And who a burning nimbus round her hair,
Wore like a meteor, and who looked with eyes
That did out-stare the furnace. My blood froze.
'Twas Pallas' self. I knew her. This was she.
I knew the scaly arms of cyanos;
I knew the grey gleam of the owl-like eyes;
I knew the end was come; and down from heaven
I knew the night had fallen, a snare of doom;
And under it our god-built Pergamus—
One darkness ruddy with a thousand fires.

* * * *

An. æt. 18, 19.



ARIADNE.

‘Prospicit, et magnis curarum fluctuat undis.’

CATULLUS.



ARIADNE.

I.

MOTIONLESS, like some maddening Bacchanal
Struck marble in mid frenzy, with the call
Caught on her fundering lips, so seemed she there,
Gazing ; all marble, save the rise and fall
Of the long troubled amber of her hair.

II.

No motion else ; but ever far away
She gazed towards the sky's low paler grey
The swoll'n seas heaved against, and evermore
Blew in her face white powdery drift of spray—
That live-tressed statue on the lonely shore.

III.

So round her there the storm grew gustier,
And hoar sky storm-birds round her, with no fear,
Wheeled wondering at this strange unmoving thing,
And nearer to her feet, and yet more near,
The wide white wave-edges washed whispering.

IV.

But she of nothing such had any care,
None of her loosened tiar, and straying hair
 Unshepherded in the cold and froward gale—
Fell not from off her salt breast, pale and bare,
 The loosened crimson raiment slowly fail.

V.

Sorrow had numbed each sense; yea, Sorrow now
Had numbed itself; and she, she wist not how
 Nor why she sorrowed—only dreamily
Felt the blown foam-fleet chill on cheek and brow,
 Saw the great foam-crests rearing far to sea.

VI.

And like the sea her soul was. There she found
A better voice than any of those fast bound
 In her lips petrified, and grief-choked breast—
The unutterable despairing of the found
 Of the dull, drear, troubled sea, that could not rest.

VII.

Till it seemed despair changed shape, and grew delight,
Whenever the proxy-wail of the chafed waves white
 Took heart for a stronger gust, and writhed on high
Wildlier, and the whole sea-chorus infinite
 Sated her gluttonous grief with a vaster cry.

VIII.

That saved her—eased the deadly speechlessness,
The famine of tears, brought the strained breast some ease;

Ay, verily, there she had found a comforter—
The unfathomable sympathy of the seas,
The desolate depths for fellow-sorrower.

IX.

So she endured ; and all one hueless hue
The day went by. Little that day she knew
Of time, till at length, south on the lorn sea-line,
A flush of stormy fire aroused her view—
One long low jagg'd red streak—the sunset sign.

X.

Then—help. But had that storm-day held its peace,
Strewn spangling gold-dust over blue clear seas,
That foamed at edge in twinkling lily-flower,
She had surely died—day's hateful happiness
Robbed of his prize the young god-paramour.

An. act. 19.



A MARRIAGE PROSPECT.

(FROM AN UNFINISHED DRAMA.)



A MARRIAGE PROSPECT.

(FROM AN UNFINISHED DRAMA.)

WHY should I heed their railings? What's a prude?

A devil's scarecrow in the fields of good.

Let them rail on. I think a wedding-day

Looks best, as mountains do, some miles away,

Or squalid fishing-smacks far out to sea,

Seen lily-failed in sunshine and blue haze,

Where the delicious lights are all men chafe,

And no man ever reaches. And so I'm free

Another six weeks—move in a rich half-light,

A tenderest compromise of dark and bright,

A magic season, in short, when eyes that shine

And lips that whisper with soft words, combine

The spice of wrong, the conscience-ease of right,

And deepest sighs come most luxuriously.

Then too this twilight-time leads not to night

But sunrise—that at least will gladden me,
The sunrise of my day of married life,
Ere bride and bridegroom fade to man and wife :
And I meanwhile, a short time more, am free—
Or half free ; wherefore let me love my fill
Of half-loves, ere I consecrate my days,
In sober, sombre truth, for good and ill,
To the one worship of a withering face.

An. æt. 19.



AT MORNING.



AT MORNING.

I.

NEW from yon choirs of sparklings far away,
Fresh with the South, and smelling of the sea,
Oh, how this young breeze pours clean into me
The gladness of the childhood of the day !
The floating pearl-lights twinkle and dip and play
O'er all the soft smooth sea-blue, fast and free ;
Whilst the tide's influence makes deliciously
Music and laughter in the little bay,
With ripple of song, in shoreward, glistening quick,
Live glafs o'er clearest sands seen under it,
And there amongst yon low rocks leaping sweet
In coral-shapen blossom of tender spray,
Low-gurgling with loose wash of foam-music,
Drunk with the deep child-gladness of the day !

II.

Oh, morning joy ! oh, fresh sea-scented air !
Where is the broken joy thou canst not heal,
Which thought and doubt have racked and torn piece-
meal?
Ah, breeze, breathe on, breathe hither and flake my care !
The summer sea's evangel with thee bear ;
Into mine inmost spirit let it steal !
Yea, breeze, breathe on, breathe hither, and make me feel
All the sea's summer in my lifted hair !
No thought is needed by thy felt delight
To mediate betwixt us. Oh, June air,
Thy certain rapture thrills me through and through —
A conquering joy that puts all doubt to flight.
False let it be—if truth be anywhere,
This sweet delusion at the least is true.

An. æt. 19.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF
A PET DOG

BELONGING TO LADY DOROTHY NEVILL.

‘Animula, vagula, blandula.’



*LINES ON THE DEATH OF A
PET DOG.*

I.

WHERE are you now, little wandering
Life, that so faithfully dwelt with us,
Played with us, fed with us, felt with us,
Years we grew fonder and fonder in ?

II.

You, who but yesterday sprang to us,
Are we for ever bereft of you ?
And is this all that is left of you—
One little grave and a pang to us ?

June 1878.



PYGMALION.



PRGMALION

TO HIS STATUE, BECOME HIS WIFE.

I.

IS this then so, and have I striven in vain
 To hide the change I suffer? And can you see
 Everything is not all it used to be?
 Yes, love, that past can come no more again.
 Am I in pain, too? Good—you have read my pain,
 Known it is very great. That comforts me.

II.

For now knowing this, I know your lips will spare
 Reproaches, leave the world to blur my name.
 Mark my face well. No flush of silly shame,
 But pallor only, and calm of grief is there—
 Grief—yes, in that we have one thing still to share,
 We two; for you, you will love on the same.

III.

What do I mean? Ah, me! how tenderly
Your sweet eyes ask, which once to me could bring
Balm, by a look, for any grievous thing.
What is it? Well, 'tis best that I reply—
Falter forth all myself, or by-and-by
My life will yield thee a crueller truth-telling.

IV.

Yet will you understand? or will your heart
Conceive my phrased sorrow, or ever tell
Truly to what a depth I am pitiable,
And how to thee hath fallen the better part?
Truly how far the happier one thou art,
Whose love is still a living water-well?

V.

What should I tell thee of some man who fain
Would love some woman, and find love's font run dry?
Ah, 'There's none such,' it is on your lips to cry,
'That ever longed to love and longed in vain—
Nay, none so very wretched!' Pause again!
Pause and look near, look near! That man am I.

VI.

Yes—as some blind man standing on the shore,
With the whole wet drift of the ocean-storm blown free
On his mute lids, and hearing thunderily
All the hoarse hollow length of breakers roar,
Feels one great longing overwhelm him for one more—
One wild fight more of the old yearned-for sea ;

VII.

Even so I long, taking this one wild fight,
Oh woman, of thee, for a love that is passed away—
That comes no more, as never on any day
To that dark auditor the seen delight
Of the fleets of free white waves, and foam-showers white,
And dark coasts dim with stormy clouds of spray.

VIII.

Do I wrong thee lightly ? Nay : thou canst divine
Too well the lines of anguish on my brow.
Thou must have anguish, too ; but happier thou
Wilt still have where to love, for whom to pine ;
Whilst I —— only to yearn to love is mine,
But my dead love revives not anyhow.

IX.

I have said. But you, do you take me, saying thus?
Can you ever know how forrowful men's loves are?
How we can only hear Love's voice from far—
Only despaired-of eyes be dear to us—
Mute ivory, that can never be amorous—
Far fair gold stigma of some loneliest star?

X.

The Love we follow is cruel— a mystery;
Upon the horizon only doth he dwell.
And thou, thou art now no more inscrutable,
Thou hast given and opened all thine heart to me.
I thought to embrace; I stretched mine arms to thee;
And lo, I stand and stretch them in farewell.

XI.

Ah, one dear dream, wherein I had hoped to snare
The love I chase for ever! oh, ultimate
Rest, as I dreamed thee! Lo, my love, my fate
Calls us of old far off—I know not where.
I follow. Adieu, sweet eyes! love once was there
For me; but love has left them desolate.

XII.

Tired pilgrim of a fugitive vague delight,
Where shall I rest? Alas! I fain would be
Some far-out star over the windy sea,
Bathed by the wild spray-sprinkled breath of night,
With the morn for lullaby, and the saffron light
Of the far happy morn to cradle me.

An. act. 20.



FRIENDLESS.



• *FRIENDLESS.*

THEY—had they left me? Did they trust that to
I should be comfortless? Their hating eyes
Meant it, I know; and all their virtuous lips,
Tight with a snarling sanctity of scorn,
Meant it, I know, that day. And I replied—
Looked on as some pollution—no one word;
Made no appeal to those just arbiters,
Not any of whom had any softening glance,
Even in the last. Only I rose, and mute,
Condemned of all my friends, passed right away
Out of their doors, unpitied, all alone,
Into the homeless storm. And lo, the storm
Bellowed, and howled, and raved, and welcomed me,
And the blown desolate drizzlings fell on me
Like friends; and, sweeter than all kisses, shed
On brow and cheek chill mist of briny rain,
Full of the sea's breath; and my whole heart swelled,
Feeling the great blasts tangled in my hair,
And streaming on my brow; and through the roar,

With a blind craving I climbed, and made my way
Out to a neighbouring beetling, iron-bound coast,
Facing towards the bleak Septentrion.
And as I climbed, the thunder of the hid sea
Broke on my ears, and high in air I saw
Grey vapour of flying foam going up like smoke
Over those heights, not, save on days like these,
Ever acquainted with the least blown spray.
Friends—had they left me? Oh, I went alone
Along the brink of those sheer precipices,
And felt the storms my brethren, and had ease.
For all the sea was dun, and muffled up
With yellow fog, and white with tufted foam;
And far below, against the pitiless base,
Shattering amongst black rocks, great bellowing waves
Dashed their despairing heads, and groaning died.

An. act. 19.



TOO LATE!



TOO LATE!

I.

WHAT, dead—quite dead? And can you hear no
prayer

Already? Have you in so short a space
Gone so far from your old abiding-place?
And is this all you have left me, this—to bear
The still accusings of that dear marred face?

II.

How they make bitterer all my grief than gall!
Oh, loving eyes, for ever closed on me;
Worn face that look'ed so unrepentantly!
Too late, too late, I would I could recall
Every unloving word I have said to thee!

III.

Have I been blind, never to recognise
The wounds I made till now? Ah, now I know
My cruel work in all that dumb great woe!
I see how piteous look thy poor closed eyes,
And know that it is I have made them so.

IV.

Oh why, why did you love me all these years?
Why not grow cruel to me as I to you?
Had both been false, neither had had to rue
One thing, nor shed, as I do, hard vain tears.
Why have you taunted me by being so true?

V.

Why have you let the whole remorse be mine?
Thy most sad mouth, why did it never say
One counter-word of anger? Lovingly,
Why did you let each patient, painful line,
Deepen in moanless silence day by day?

VI.

Why will tears never come, till they must fail
Of ease and comfort, and can only fear?
Why am I moaning now to a deaf ear—
Moaning, as if my words could ever avail
To make one deep-grooved pain-line shallower?

An. act. 20



THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock.’



THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

I.

OH, can it be that still Thou art standing there,
Outside mine heart's door, in Thine old sweet guise,
With the old words, 'Oh, open, and be wise !'
With patient knock and piteous pleading prayer ?
Yet still I hear Thee. But too sad to bear,
My Lord, Thy voice hath grown—Thy yearning cries
Broken with love, whereto no love replies.
Yet hope—hope still. I need not yet despair.
I will hasten and undo the door at last ;
I am hastening now for fear Thou else be gone.
Enter, my Christ ! or ere the hour be past !
Ah, me ! how dusty are the door-posts grown !
Baffled again ! Help, help me here alone—
The hinges and the lock are rusted fast.

II.

And I am dreamy and weak. I cannot tell
What slothful power hath hold on all my heart.
I would some thunder-bolt of thought would dart
Right in the midst, and burst the drowsy spell,
Sharp with fierce thunder and flame intolerable ;
That this blind, curfed film were cloven apart ;
That my dull eyes might open with a start,
And sting, brought face to naked face with hell !
Lord, I have no strength left to come to Thee.
Oh would that me, thus weak in drunkard's wife,
Something might rouse, sharp as the chill surprise
Of interlunar fresh night winds, that be
Blown in some reveller's dizzy, aching eyes,
Wild from sea-stars and windy wastes of sea !

An. æt. 19.



SONNET ON THE LAST VERSE OF THE BIBLE.

‘ If any man add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book ; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.’



SONNET

ON

THE LAST VERSE OF THE BIBLE.

LAST on the golden lyre ; O last vibration !
Still are thy dread chords quivering fearfully !
Nor spent and silent shall the long sound be,
Till, like a bridegroom, lo, with exultation,
Over the last, the faithless generation,
Another sound goes out to welcome Thee,
Thy spouse, the thunder long delaying ; and ye
Be blended in one vast reverberation,
Thou and the trumpet, over land and sea :
And the day dawns when scarce the righteous stands,
And the Great Judge, with hard avenging hands,
And infinite terror heralding His path,
Sheds the last curse over sins, and seas, and lands,
From the wine-cup of the fierceness of His wrath.

An. æt. 19.



PROTEUS.

A fenfe fublime

Of fomething far more deeply interfufed,
Whofe dwelling is the light of fetting funs.

Σοὶ καὶ ξυνείμι καὶ λόγοις σ' ἀμείβομαι,
Κλυών μὲν ἀνδρῶν, ὄμμα δ' οὐχ ὄρωϊν τὸ σόν.

EUR. *Hipp.* 84.



PROTEUS.

I.

SOLE in blank boundless darknes, dimly bright,
The hornèd moon hangs o'er the viewless sea,
Whose faint lips at my feet wash fitfully
Up the black shingle in whisperings of crisp light.
Lonely I stand, the midnight's eremite,
Whilst my awed seaward gaze goes earnestly
Into the darknes face to face with me—
The darknes where the sea is, and the night.
And lo, I feel It coming again, again,
Up from the deeps as Proteus did of old.
Ah, wert thou like that old god of the main,
To whom we cry, 'Unveil!' for ever in vain,
Formless Desire, which no eye may behold,
No hands of ours can weary, and no spell chain.

II.

Oh, bosom-friend ! familiar Mystery !
Oh, Lurer with veiled face ! oh, Comforter !
One spirit of many forms, felt everywhere,
Who knows what manner of Spirit thou mayst be ?
None, though his most loved haunts are full of thee—
Valleys where leaves and clear streams sleep and stir,
The blue flash of the diving kingfisher—
The rose whose depth of scent soft rains set free—
Though thy wild way be with the hurricane,
Thunder and cloud ; though he behold the day
Cradling thee in some loneliest eastern fleece
Of crimson fire ; and sadly fighting again
His evening soul bewail thee, dying away
To unknown lands, and gold Hesperian seas.

III.

Lo, even now thou art very near to me,
But veiled, and far as ever from my prayer.
Still my soul feels thee, and strange longings there
Start at thy voice, and cry in choirs towards thee.
In my mid soul what may this tumult be—
Longings I cannot rule, that do not dare
Whole days to stir within their secret lair,

But at thy call seek their wild Rhodopé ?

One to another in a strange tongue calls :

I hearken, but can catch not what they say,

Only I hear their voices far away

Swell to a passionate clamour at intervals.

Ah, who art thou, their god ? For what boon pray

These, mine own inmost soul's vague Bacchanals ?

IV.

What ! wilt Thou never be revealed to us ?

Must our souls still in blindness follow Thee,

Nor, borne in swift raft over the deep sea,

Ever sleep even upon thy Dindymus ?

Not ever build Thee up a pillared house,

And serve Thee with articulate liturgy ?

Never before Thine altar bend our knee,

And twine rare flowers in garlands round Thy brows ?

No costlier offerings than these prefer—

Blind discontent, insatiable unrest,

And lonely love following an unknown quest,

Sad as man's love for woman, and tenderer ?

Lo, these be all we offer—alas ! our best :

No certain gold and frankincense and myrrh !

V.

Do we then waver, and fear we are fools and blind ?
Doubt we, and ask we whither lead Thy ways ?
Ask, whither ! Nay, *see* whence, pale, doubtful face !
Look back and see what things we have left behind—
Anger, and blinding lusts, and loves that bind,
And the mean voice that to any moment says
‘ Stay ! thou art fair ;’ as with unflinching pace,
Veiled One, we follow Thee, and trust to find
Hereafter, Thee unveiled, knowing and known,
Set with a rainbow round about Thy throne,
Soul of our life’s unrest ! to find in Thee
The Thing we have long sought forrowing here from far—
The Spirit of the bright and morning star,
The sunrise, and the sunset, and the sea.

An. act. 20.

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